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Groups of countries in special situations: specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries: outcome of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation

Letter dated 30 October 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Mongolia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to transmit herewith the Ulaanbaatar Declaration adopted at the Meeting of Trade Ministers of Landlocked Developing Countries, held in Ulaanbaatar on 28 and 29 August 2007, which addressed the particular needs and specific challenges faced by the landlocked developing countries, as well as ways and means to ensure their effective participation in the World Trade Organization negotiations (see annex).

During the meeting participants decided to encourage international organizations to continue their analytical work on international trade and make the research results available to the landlocked developing countries in order to enhance their analytical capacity and help them design and implement appropriate trade policies and trade promotion measures, including trade development strategies and formulation of their common position within the framework of the World Trade Organization negotiations.

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 57 (b).

(*Signed*) Enkhtsetseg **Ochir**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Mongolia to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 30 October 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Mongolia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Ulaanbaatar Declaration adopted at the Meeting of Trade Ministers of Landlocked Developing Countries

Ulaanbaatar, 28 and 29 August 2007

We, the Ministers and officials responsible for trade of the Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), meeting in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, on 28 and 29 of August 2007:

Noting that despite the welfare that the international trading system has brought to many nations in the world, the LLDCs continue to be marginalized in the international trade of goods, and hence they are unable to fully benefit from globalization, mainly due to the geographical disadvantages related to landlockedness,

Reaffirming our belief in the liberalization of trade and in the potential benefits of the multilateral trading system for achieving a non-discriminatory, rules-based and predictable trade environment which provides every country, regardless of its territorial size, number of population, or level of development, with the opportunity to effectively and beneficially participate in global trade,

Emphasizing the importance of the development dimension of the Doha Work Programme and the commitment of World Trade Organization (WTO) Members to reach a final outcome consistent with the trade-related necessities of developing countries and, especially, of those that are particularly vulnerable,

Recognizing that addressing the challenges of landlockedness requires undertaking domestic actions to create a business-enabling environment,

Urging the adoption of general as well as specific measures taking into account the particular needs and special problems of landlocked developing countries in the context of the WTO, as well as in other relevant trade fora,

Recognizing the challenges faced by LLDCs acceding to the WTO — namely Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bhutan, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, Lao PDR, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan — within the context of their accession processes,

Believing that LLDCs' effective participation in the WTO negotiations is key to expanding their trade and development opportunities, including through securing special and differential treatment,

Recalling the Asuncion Platform for the Doha Development Round, adopted at the Meeting of the L.I.DC Ministers responsible for trade, on August 10th, 2005, in Asuncion,

Recalling and emphasizing the importance of the Almaty Programme of Action: *Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries*,

Agree as follows

1. To call on all WTO Members, particularly the major trading partners, to engage in constructive, results-oriented negotiations for a successful conclusion of the Doha Round. For this purpose, LLDCs shall urge said Members to make significant contributions in market access, including tariff escalation and domestic support, in the negotiations on agriculture, aimed at reaching full modalities as soon as possible, and commensurate progress in other areas of work, in line with the Doha mandate, the July 2004 Framework and the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration.

2. LLDCs shall encourage WTO Members to address the issue of cotton ambitiously, expeditiously and specifically in its trade-related and development aspects. For that purpose, Members shall adopt the proposal made by the members of the Sectorial Initiative in favour of Cotton, C4, related to the reduction of the Domestic Support which distorts the international cotton market. Members shall also adopt measures that would vastly improve market access conditions for cotton and cotton-derived products. The outcome of the agricultural negotiations shall ensure that WTO Members can take joint actions to set up a mechanism to address the loss of revenue that cotton producing developing countries are facing as a result of declining cotton prices in international markets due to highly distorting subsidies.

3. Because of the heavy dependence of LLDCs on a few commodities, the modalities to be adopted in the WTO shall not only refer to the future liberalization of trade in tropical products for diversification from illicit crops, but shall also include products which will help LLDCs to diversify their exports.

4. LLDCs shall encourage WTO-Members to agree to provide them with substantial improvement in market access for non-agricultural products as well as flexibilities, with the view to helping them diversify their exports. Such improvements shall be reflected in the modalities to be adopted in the WTO.

5. LLDCs recognise that services offer promising growth opportunities for their economies, due to the important role they play in sectors such as business, finance, transport, logistics, and tourism, in the successful implementation of diversification policies, and in terms of the export of services where landlockedness becomes less of an issue. Therefore, LLDCs shall actively participate in services negotiations and present their case appropriately. They shall also assess the possibility of sponsoring and promoting initiatives intended to provide LLDCs with technical assistance targeted at improving the competitiveness of their services sectors.

6. LLDCs shall continue to encourage and support the work of the Trade Facilitation Negotiating Group, with a view to attaining, as a final outcome, an instrument containing globally binding commitments to ensure the freedom of transit, the removal of transit transport impediments that undermine the landlocked developing countries' trade competitiveness, and the improvement of overall trade conditions, so as to expedite the movement, release and clearance of goods, especially those in transit. The outcome of the negotiations on Trade Facilitation shall also address the issues of special and differential treatment (S&DT), technical assistance and capacity building pursuant to the mandates of Annex D of the Decision of the General Council of August 1, 2004, and consistent with the level of development of all WTO Members.

7. LLDCs shall encourage WTO Members to adopt a trade facilitation S&DT architecture that enables developing Members, and particularly those who are transit partners to the LLDCs, to implement trade facilitation measures to be agreed. Special attention shall be paid to the implementation and monitoring of existing and future transit agreements.

8. Bilateral and multilateral donors, international financial and other relevant international organizations, shall, upon request, provide LLDCs and their transit partners with technical assistance to identify their trade facilitation needs and priorities, including the cost implications of proposed measures, so as to enable their full and effective participation in the ongoing trade facilitation negotiations and their preparations for the effective and speedy implementation of the adopted measures, especially in LLDCs' transit countries.

9. Technical assistance and capacity building shall also be provided to LLDCs during the trade facilitation negotiations, as well as during the implementation and post implementation periods, as these shall seek not only to achieve compliance with the measures to be adopted, but also to help LLDCs enhance their overall trade competitiveness. Regional projects, as well as projects involving private business partners relating to trade infrastructure, should receive special attention.

10. In cooperation with the private sector, LLDCs shall promote the creation of national fora, in which involved parties could engage in a constructive dialogue on trade facilitation needs, priorities and problems.

11. Members shall continue to work on the relationship between the TRIPS Agreement and the Convention on Biological Diversity. Within this framework, patent applicants shall be required to disclose the source and/or the country of origin of the genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge used in their invention; to obtain prior informed consent; to share the benefits of these inventions; and to provide evidence that the patent applicants have adhered to these requirements.

12. WTO-LLDC Members shall continue to assist LLDCs who are in the process of accession to the WTO. To this end, WTO-LLDC Members shall participate in the working parties of acceding LLDCs and advocate fair treatment regarding commitments to be made by the latter. These commitments should be commensurate with their level of development. Acceding LLDCs should notably not be expected to provide WTO.-plus commitments, including in TRIPS protection. They should enjoy additional flexibilities that may be necessary to implementing policies directed towards human capital formation and to developing national capacities for technological learning and innovation. All provisions on S&DT reflected in the GATT and all WTO Agreements shall be granted to all acceding LLDCs.

13. WTO-LLDC Members shall seek to develop partnerships with relevant organizations such as ATTIC, UNCTAD, UNDP, WTO, ITC, Regional Commissions and others, as well as with donor countries, with the objective of providing LLDCs acceding to the WTO with targeted technical assistance to guide and support them through the entire accession process until its successful completion.

14. In order to enable LLDCs to play an active role in the global trading system and to use trade as an instrument for growth and poverty alleviation, WTO-LLDC Members shall vigorously seek to ensure that their trade problems are effectively understood by other WTO Members and are prominently reflected in the Aid for

Trade agenda. To this end, LLDCs shall participate in the forthcoming debate in the General Council on Aid for Trade, scheduled for autumn 2007, and in other events, requesting special consideration of their specific problems within this new initiative.

15. LLDCs shall encourage Members to initiate the provision of assistance in the context of the Aid for Trade agenda as soon as possible, and independently from the final result of the ongoing round of negotiations.

16. In the context of the Aid for Trade architecture, LLDCs shall pursue the goal of obtaining targeted assistance in areas such as capacity building for the formulation of trade policies, participation in trade negotiations, implementation of international agreements and, particularly, in strengthening of productive capacities with a view to increasing the competitiveness of LLDCs' products in export markets. Taking into account that many LLDCs are dependent on the export of a few and often low-value commodities, Aid for Trade shall support LLDCs' efforts to enhance business conditions and develop sustainable diversification strategies. With a view to improving LLDCs' productive capacities, including for quality and knowledge-intensive goods, and overcoming supply-side constraints, national policies should focus on human capital formation, the development of technological learning and innovation, and on the promotion of business linkages between national enterprises, in particular SMEs, and transnational firms.

17. LLDCs shall explore areas where S&DT in different negotiating groups and other relevant WTO fora would be appropriate to address specific problems faced by LLDCs, including economic distance from major markets, market access and other issues. In order to strengthen LLDCs' case in every group and/or forum, they shall work constructively with international organizations, whose knowledge could contribute to identify courses of action to attain this goal.

18. LLDCs shall explore the possibility of setting up subject-specific groups to address issues of special interest, such as foreign investment and customs matters.

19. LLDCs shall continue to work in close coordination and cooperation in their efforts to draw the attention of the international community to their special problems and needs and to seek for the adoption of internationally agreed policies and measures addressing their particular vulnerabilities.

20. LLDCs shall continue to participate in a unified, coherent and organized manner in relevant events and discussions on trade and development, such as the UNCTAD and WTO Ministerial Conferences. They shall also support all efforts aimed at strengthening an open and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system that ensures the effective participation and full integration of LLDCs.

21. LLDCs shall encourage international organizations to continue their analytical work on international trade and to make the research results available in order to enhance LLDCs' analytical capacity and to help them design and implement appropriate trade policies and trade-promoting measures, including trade development strategies and formulation of common positions in the WTO.

22. LLDCs shall consider setting up an international think-tank which could be located in Ulaanbaatar. For this purpose, LLDCs urge international organizations and donor countries to assist them in achieving this endeavour.

23. LLDCs shall engage fully in the process of preparation of the mid-term review of the Almaty Programme of Action and shall participate in the review itself at the highest level possible.

We acknowledge UN-OHRLLS, UNCTAD, UNDP, WTO, Regional Commissions and ATTIC for their constant support to LLDCs, as well as for the provision of valuable help and timely information on trade-related issues and other issues of specific interest.

We request UN-OHRLLS, UNCTAD, UNDP, WTO, Regional Commissions and AITIC to continue to assist landlocked developing countries in their efforts to effectively participate in international trade discussions and negotiations, including in the Doha Round of Trade Negotiations and other WTO fora.

We express our profound appreciation to the authorities and the people of Mongolia for hosting this event.